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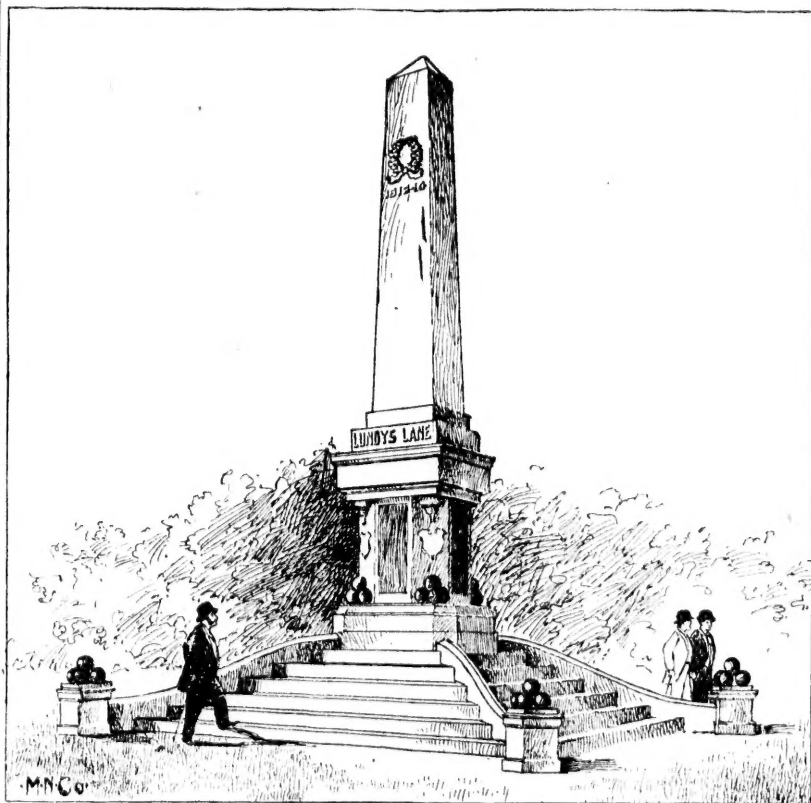
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DRUMMOND'S WINTER CAMPAIGN

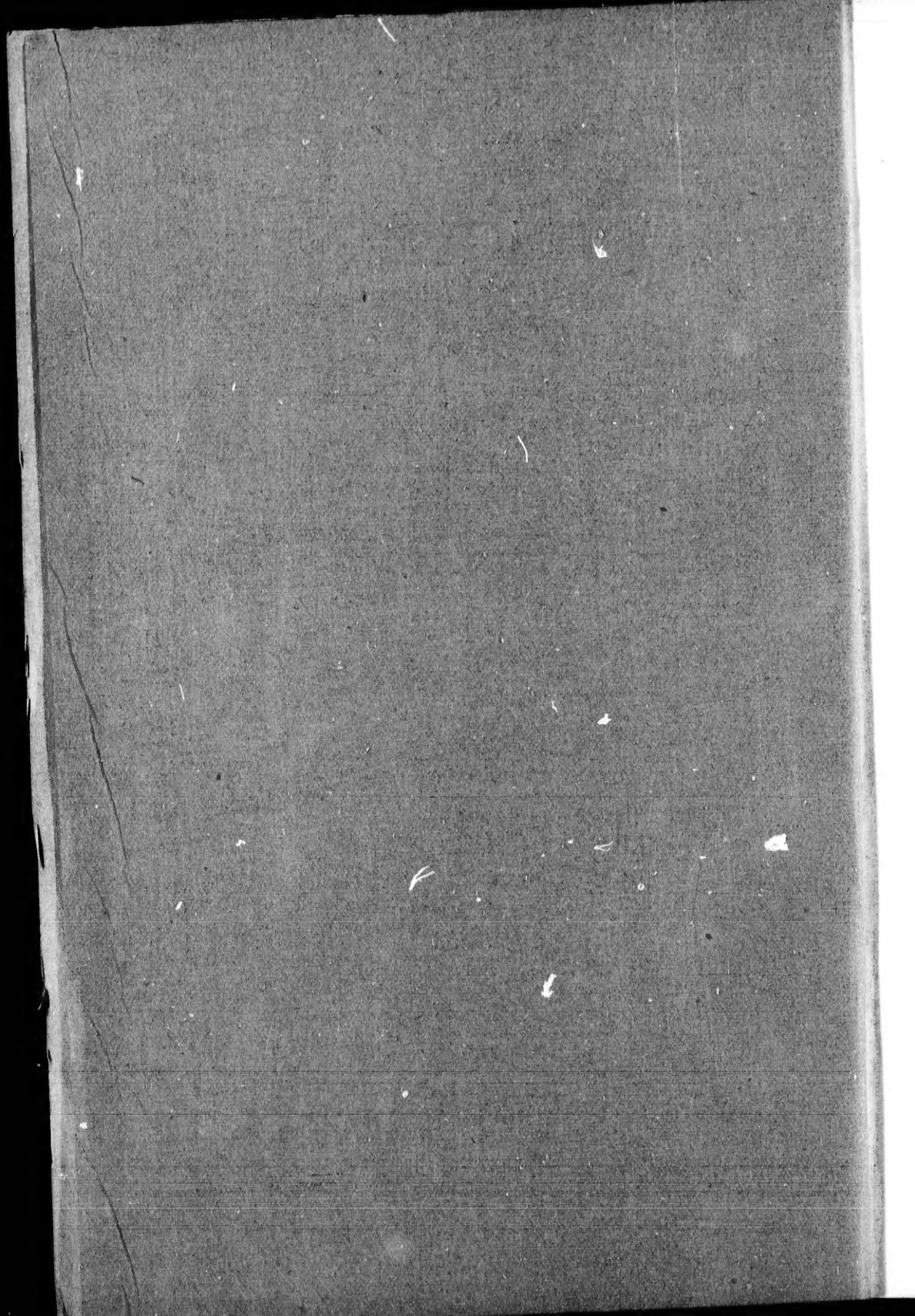


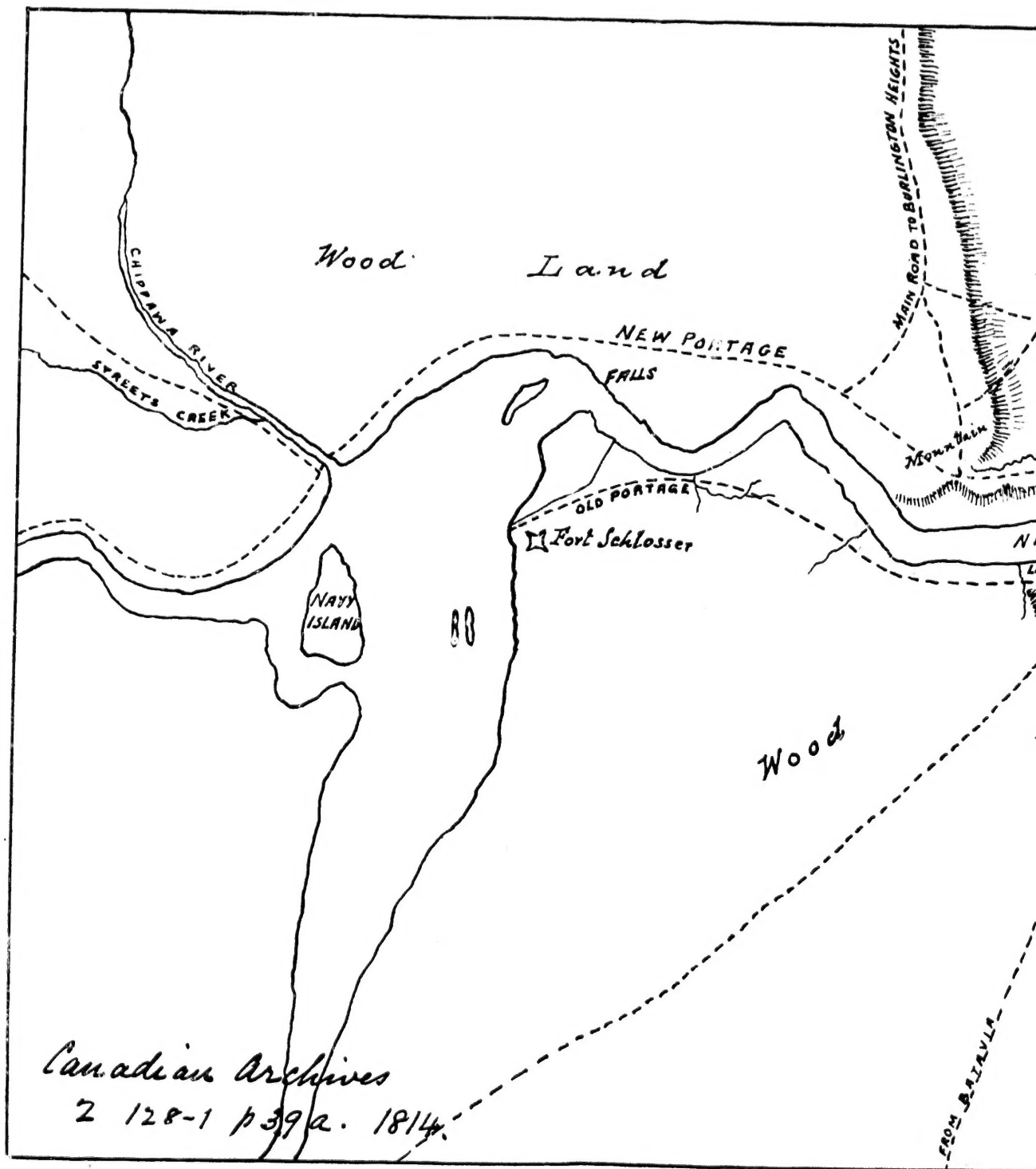
BY LIEUT.-COL. E. CRUIKSHANK,

AUTHOR OF "BATTLE OF LUNDYS LANE," &c., &c.

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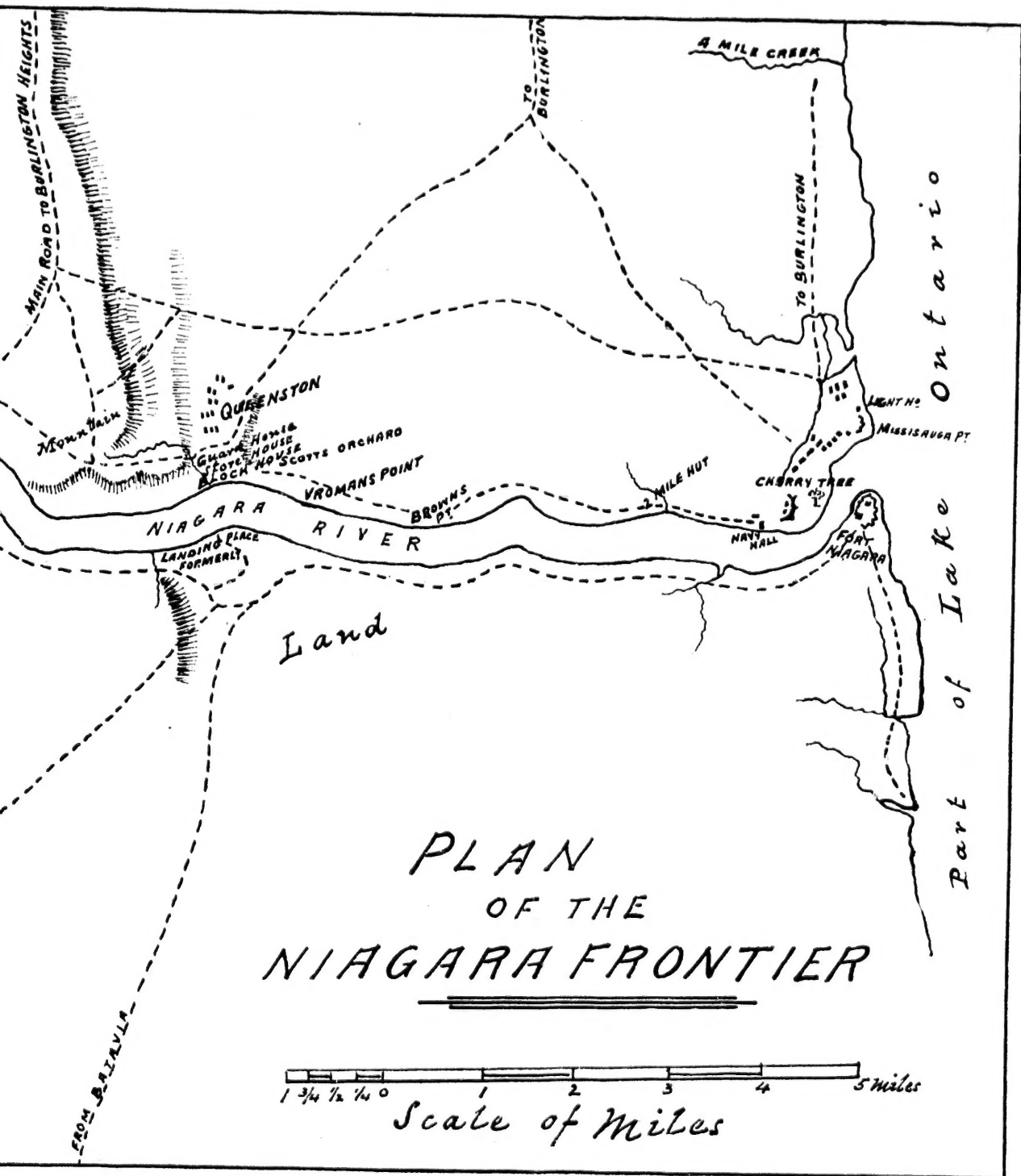
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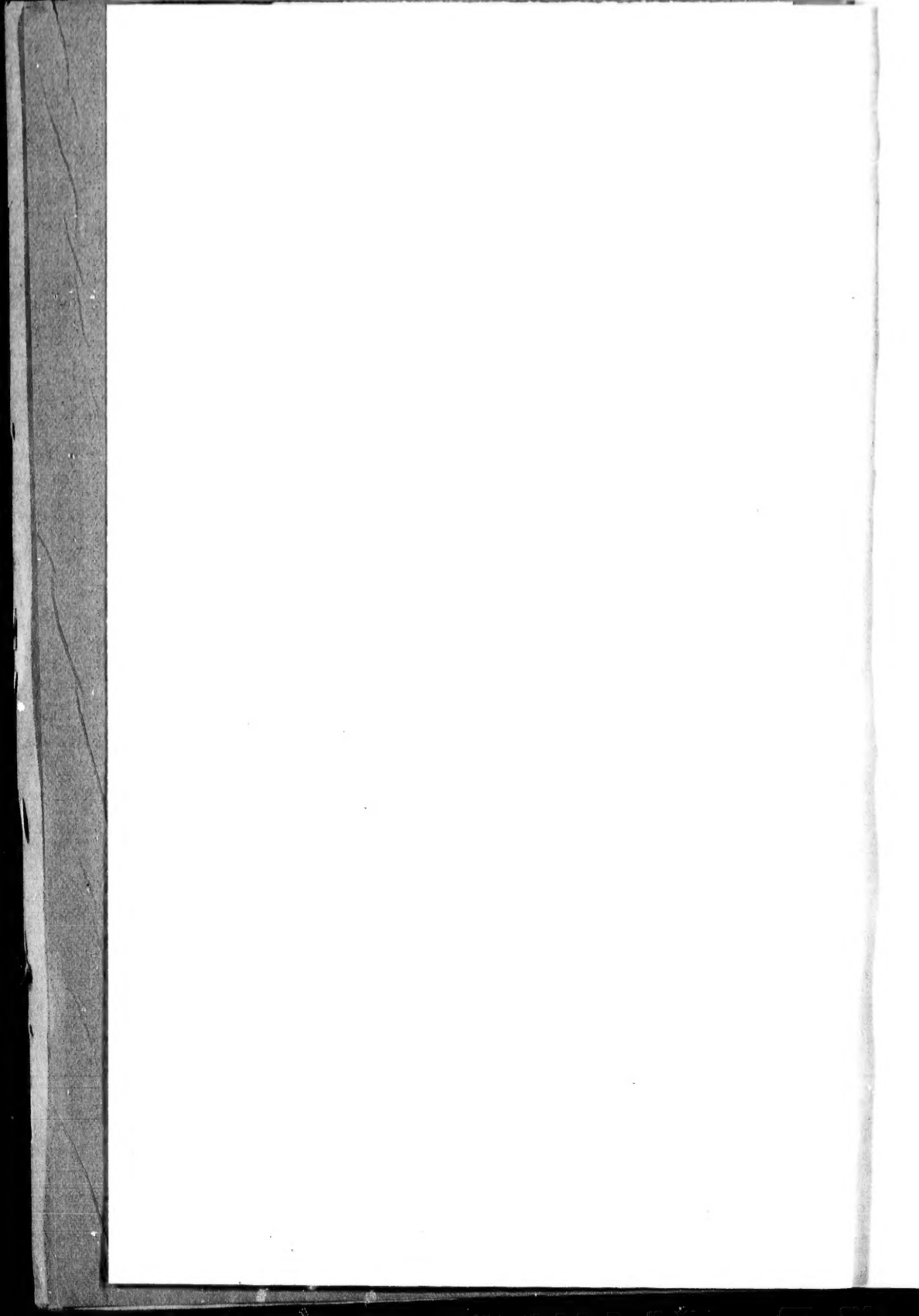




Canadian Archives

2 128-1 p39a. 1814.





DRUMMOND'S WINTER CAMPAIGN

1813.



—BY—

LIEUT.-COL. E. CRUIKSHANK,

AUTHOR OF

"THE STORY OF BUTLER'S RANGERS," &C., &C.

SECOND EDITION.

REVISED AND ENLARGED.

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Drummond's Winter Campaign.

1813.

From the beginning of July to the beginning of September, 1813, a wretchedly equipped British force of about 3,000 regular soldiers, assisted by a few hundred militia and Indians, had blockaded nearly double their numbers in an entrenched camp under the walls of Fort George at Niagara, and kept the invaders inactive during the most favorable season for military operations. The conduct of this little army had been uniformly distinguished by courage and tenacity. Successful offensive movements at Stoney Creek, Beaver Dams, Schlosser, and Black Rock, demonstrated that enterprise was not wanting when an opportunity offered, and in the daily skirmishes during the summer they had seldom failed to gain the advantage, yet they lacked nearly everything that contributes to make a soldier's life in the field endurable. For much of the time they were without tents or camp equipage of any description; some of the regiments were almost barefooted, and their uniforms were torn to rags by hard service. None of them had received any pay for many months. This was probably the least of their hardships, for money could be of small use to them when there was scarcely anything to be bought at any price. The salt provisions issued to them were barely edible: medicines of the commonest kinds were not to be had. Much of their ammunition was spoiled by being transported in open country wagons. Under these circumstances it is not remarkable that desertions became numerous and sickness increased to an unprecedented extent. 1.

A reconnoissance in force on the 24th August convinced the Governor-General, who was present, although it failed to convince the soldiers and some of the officers of rank, that an attack upon the enemy's camp would not be practicable without siege artillery. The arrival of the American Secretary of War at Sackett's Harbor, accompanied by General Wilkinson, who had recently been selected for command of their *Northern Army*, and the concentration of a considerable force at that place, caused Sir George Prevost to hasten back to Kingston, leaving the

1 De Rottenburg to Prevost, Sept. 5; *Id.*, Sept. 8.

command of the centre division again in the hands of Major-General Francis De Rottenburg, an easy-going Swiss officer who had superseded General Vincent in July. The American fleet then suddenly sailed from Sackett's Harbor, and evading the British squadron under Sir James Yeo, which was convoying some transports down the lake, ran into the Niagara River on the 3rd of September. Its unexpected appearance placed De Rottenburg in a very difficult position. At that time Colonel Stewart, Majors Plenderleath and Williams, Captain FitzGibbon, and many other less distinguished officers, with 500 soldiers, were disabled by sickness. The remainder of his army were more or less affected by the intense heat, which for several weeks past had scorched and withered the surrounding country like the breath of a furnace. The weak battalions of haggard and barefooted men in soiled and faded rags, that had once been brilliant uniforms, occupying a straggling line of camps and outposts stretching from the mouth of the Four Mile Creek through St. Davids and Queenston to Chippawa, seemed scarcely capable of resisting any resolute attack. The American army was well fed and clothed, and enjoyed comfortable quarters, yet long inaction, and neglect of the simplest sanitary precautions, had caused nearly as much sickness in its ranks. The soldiers were dispirited by repeated defeats, and wanted confidence in their leaders, yet it was evident to their opponents that they were daily improving in discipline and endurance, and that the disparity between the regular soldiers of the two armies, hitherto so marked, was gradually diminishing as the campaign advanced. ¹

On the 4th September, the British squadron appeared at the mouth of the river and offered battle. Four days later Commodore Chauncey, having taken on board artillery and riflemen from the forts, sailed out to accept the challenge. The result of the engagement was waited for with intense excitement by the two armies, whose fate depended upon it. But both of the naval commanders, daunted by the serious consequences of a defeat, had made up their minds to fight at only an advantage, and for five entire days they manoeuvred within view, exchanging an occasional shot at long range. In this mode of warfare the number of Chauncey's long guns and the description of his vessels gave him a decided superiority, and on the 15th his adversary abandoned the contest and returned to Kingston to refit and obtain provisions. ²

In the interval the Governor-General had gained information which enabled him to forecast the latest plan of invasion with remarkable accuracy.

"The enemy," he wrote to Lord Bathurst from Kingston on the 22nd September, "having failed in the invasion of Upper Canada, it is asserted, by General Dearborn's disobedience to orders in attacking York instead of Kingston and having delayed attacking this place until the state of defence made it less practicable, this error, it is stated, has marred the campaign. The American Government has substituted the following scheme, which is to

¹ De Rottenburg to Prevost, Aug. 30, Sept. 5: *Ridout Letters*; Mann, *Medical Sketches of the War*.

² De Rottenburg, Sept. 5, Sept. 8, Sept. 17.

be realized at this late period by combining the movements of their Northern army under General Wilkinson, the Northwestern under General Harrison, and a strong corps of observation under General Hampton, with the three flotillas on Lakes Erie, Ontario and Champlain. The Secretary of War has been placed at Sackett's Harbor as a central point from which he will be able to direct simultaneous attacks on the Lower Canada, Niagara, and the Detroit frontiers."

Discretionary orders had already been given De Rottenburg to retire as far as Burlington, but the latter announced his intention of maintaining his position as long as possible to preserve the resources of the country in his rear. Upon receiving this reply, Prevost urged Yeo to return to Niagara with his squadron at once and act in concert with General De Rottenburg, who was entrusted with the administration of the civil as well as the military affairs of the Province. "The centre division of the army in Upper Canada," he observed, "has long been in a singular position of investing a superior force: it is much weakened by disease and desertion; and its situation is rendered critical by temporary naval ascendancy of the enemy. The policy of the American commanders is to protract the final decision in the expectation of depriving me of the means of forwarding supplies, as it is well-known the state of the country will only admit of their being transported by water." At the same time he provided De Rottenburg with precise and sensible instructions. He was advised to retain his present position as long as it was prudent, "although exposed to a lamentable prevalence of disease and desertion and the increasing numbers and resources of the enemy. The land operations depend almost entirely on successes of the fleet, but to have relinquished one foot of ground on which we so proudly stand would have lost all our wavering friends and have proved destructive to our Indian allies. I trust that the advanced divisions of the army are not encumbered with heavy or superfluous baggage. No consideration of that kind should impede the march of the troops for one moment. The removal of the sick, wounded, and convalescents must be previously arranged. Every position which the country affords is to be occupied and defended, and the enemy made to pay dearly for every step he advances. All retrograde movements are to be resorted to with reluctance; they are to be as limited as the circumstances which cause them will allow, and they are never to be hurried or accelerated unless occasioned by circumstances of peculiar urgency. Major General Procter receives orders corresponding in principle with the above. He is to keep in view the relative dependence and mutual support between the right and central divisions. He is to exhaust every means and resource in his power before he resorts to a retreat. Nothing in any way serviceable is to be left to fall in the enemy's hands, and every injury and annoyance resorted to which is possible to cripple or repulse the enemy.

"A revision of the militia force is recommended. All old men, sickly, cripples, and lads incapable for service should be rejected. As the battalions become weakened from desertion or other causes, the companies are to be consolidated into companies of not less than 50 rank and file.

Their services are to be dispensed with as much as possible, and they are to be employed on services separate and distinct from troops of the line."

Before this letter was received, that General's embarrassments had vastly increased. On the 10th of September the ill-equipped and undermanned British squadron on Lake Erie was defeated and every vessel taken. The number of sick had more than doubled. Sometimes eight or ten men deserted to the enemy in a single day. American officers asserted that in three months nearly 500 deserters came into their camp at Fort George. They probably lost an equal number in the same way, but they were better able to spare them and could recruit without difficulty. The weekly return of the 15th of September showed that the army commanded by De Rottenburg consisted of 2,235 effective rank and file and 926 sick, distributed from Chippawa to Burlington.* 1.

Deserters reported that General Wilkinson had arrived in the American camp and issued a general order announcing that General Harrison was "doing well" and might be expected to come to his assistance very soon with the greater part of his army, and warning his troops to be in readiness to march at a moment's notice. 2.

The wretched state of his army filled De Rottenburg with gloom, "What with sickness and desertion," he wrote to the Governor-General, on the 17th September, "I am now almost *au bout de mon latin*, and my situation daily becomes more desperate. More than 1,000 men are laid up with disease, and officers in still greater proportion.† Daily five or six villains go off.

*Weekly distribution return of the Centre Division, 15th September, 1813.

HEADQUARTERS, 4-MILE CREEK.

Col. Young, commanding.

	Officers	Effectives, N. C. O. and Men.	Sick Rank and File Only.
19th Light Dragoons.....	—	8	—
Provincial do	—	5	—
Royal Artillery.....	3	20	17
R. A. Drivers	2	18	7
Provincial Artillery	1	2	—
8th Regiment	24	385	244
100th Regiment.....	4	77	8
104th Regiment.....	19	228	58
Colored Corps.....	1	22	4
	54	765	338

CROSS ROADS, MAJOR-GENERAL VINCENT.

Lt.-Col. Battersby, commanding.

	Officers.	Effectives N. C. O. and Men.	Sick, Rank and File Only.
19th Light Dragoons	3	40	19
Provincial do	2	7	5
Royal Artillery.....	1	13	—
Militia do	—	5	—

1. Impartial History. De Rottenburg, Sept. 5, 8, 10, 17. Return in Freer Papers.

2. DeRottenburg, Sept. 10.

† The 49th could muster but fit for duty no more than sixteen out of about fifty commissioned officers. The Battalion numbered less than 370 effectives. James. Military Occurrences of the Late War. Vol. 1, page 261.

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There is no thoroughly healthy spot to retire to as far as York. Burlington is quite as bad as here. The fever and ague rages and the inhabitants are

R. A. Drivers.....	1	8	1
1st Royal Scots.....	22	520	178
89th Regiment.....	1	36	21
Glengarry Light Infantry.....	15	245	34
Canadian Voltigeurs.....	8	107	58
	53	1081	320

ST. DAVIDS, QUEENSTON AND CHIPPAWA.

Col. Murray, commanding.
St. Davids and Queenston.

	Effectives, Officers. N. C. O. and Men	Sick, Rank and File only.
19th Light Dragoons.....	5	16
Provincial do.....	—	2
Royal Artillery.....	—	6
R. A. Drivers.....	—	5
Militia Artillery.....	—	3
49th Regiment.....	22	317
Incorporated Militia.....	5	20
	32	369
		129

CHIPPAWA.

	Effectives, Officers. N. C. O. and Men	Sick, Rank and File Only.
Provincial Dragoons.....	—	2
Royal Artillery.....	—	13
1st Royal Scots.....	—	5
8th Regiment.....	—	8
49th Regiment.....	1	51
104th Regiment.....	—	3
Glengarry Light Infantry.....	—	2
	1	84

TEN AND TWELVE MILE CREEKS,

Detachments.....	9	104	15
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TWENTY AND FORTY MILE CREEKS.

Detachments.....	1	28	—
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HEAD OF THE LAKE.

Detachments.....	14	183	124
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as sickly as the soldiers. If you cannot send me fresh troops, the country will be lost for want of hands to defend it. If I am attacked and forced back, one-half of the sick will be lost for want of conveyance."

According to an official return of the 2nd August, the number of the American troops at Fort George was 6,635, all regulars.*

On the 15th of the same month, General P. B. Porter arrived there with 1000 militia and Indians. A corps of so-called Canadian Volunteers was also formed under the command of the two renegade members of the Provincial Legislature, Joseph Willcocks and Benajah Mallory. This was said by deserters to consist of 130 men, who wore "a white cockade and green ribbon around the hat." Making due allowance for losses, there seems no reason to question the statement of an American newspaper in the

*Dragoons, 241; Artillery, 277; Light Infantry, 481; Infantry, 5636.

beginning of September, that General Wilkinson's army was then composed of 6,000 soldiers and 500 Indians. 1.

The result of the naval battle on Lake Erie was announced to the British camp by the thunders of a prolonged salute from the cannon of the forts. This was followed fast by news of fresh disasters. On the 28th September the fleets on Lake Ontario began an engagement in plain view. After a contest for several hours an officer in the lookout station on Queenston Heights saw the British flagship *Wolfe* lose a topmast, and run for shelter into Burlington Bay, followed by her consorts. Again Chauncey's long guns had triumphed, and the action became so much of a running fight that the British seamen termed it the "Burlington Races." 2

A body of American militia overran the country, between Chippawa and Fort Erie, and their foraging or marauding parties penetrated as far west as Port Dover. Numbers of the more recent immigrants from the United States, in that locality were quite apathetic, and equally ready to supply friend or foe when well paid for it. 3.

Chauncey's success, indecisive though it was, opened the road for Wilkinson's long projected movement against Montreal. Accordingly, on the 2nd of October, 4,000 men were embarked at Niagara for this purpose and sailed down the lake under convoy of their fleet. Two regiments of regular soldiers with the militia and Indians, about 1,500 men in all, remained behind to occupy the works at Fort George. Next morning this movement was discovered by De Rottenburg, who hurried off to Kingston, leaving orders for the 49th, 104th, and Canadian Voltigeurs to follow without delay, in boats. General Vincent resumed command of the remainder of the division with instructions to maintain his ground as long as possible, keeping up a communication with General Procter, who had announced his intention of retreating from Amherstburg and finally retiring to Burlington. Eleven hundred men were sick, of whom eight hundred were in the field hospitals or in quarters. A faint effort was made to remove these poor fellows to York, but four days passed and nothing was done for want of waggons. Then came the dismal news that Procter's division had been utterly routed on the Thames, accompanied by the report that the victors were pursuing the fugitives in their flight towards Burlington. Had this been true, that important position with all the stores accumulated there, must have fallen into their hands and Vincent's retreat would have been irretrievably cut off. There was no time for consideration or inquiry. Vincent retired in great haste, after destroying part of his baggage. He was not immediately pursued, but the sufferings of the sick, who were jolted in open farm wagons over almost impassable roads, could not well be exaggerated, and many died in consequence. On reaching Burlington he gallantly resolved to risk a battle rather than abandon the scattered remnant of

1. *Niles Register*, Sept. 4, *Albany Argus*; *Buffalo Gazette*, 1813; James's Military Occurrences; Deposition of Francis Brown, a deserter. 2. De Rottenburg, Sept. 17; Ridout Letters; Cooper, Naval Hist.; James. 3. *Buffalo Gazette*; *Albany Argus*; Merritt's Journal; Ridout Letters.

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Procter's division. In a few days he was joined by 246 officers and men belonging to the heroic but ill-fated little band that had so long held the enemy at bay at Detroit, and more than 800 Indian warriors with their families. His chief difficulty then was the problem of providing food for a multitude of helpless non-combatants, whom honor and gratitude alike forbade him to desert. On the very day of Procter's overthrow, Commodore Chauncey took five small transports on Lake Ontario, carrying two hundred soldiers from the centre division to reinforce the garrison of Kingston. The Governor-General, dismayed by this series of disasters, determined to abandon the whole of the Province west of that place and gave orders for its evacuation, but on learning that Vincent still felt hopeful of retaining his position at Burlington, he promptly countermanded them. The new line of defence extended from Turkey Point on Lake Erie, through Ancaster and Burlington to York, and was occupied by one squadron of the 19th Light Dragoons, one company of Royal Artillery, the first battalion of the Royal Scots and the remains of the first battalions of the 8th and 41st, the 100th regiment and Glengarry Light infantry, besides militia and Indians. We are assured that in the face of all their recent reverses there was no trace of despondency among them. On the 23rd October De Rottenburg forwarded to Vincent the required permission to retain this position as long as practicable. "You will make provision," he added, "for sheltering 800 regulars at Burlington, to consist of the Royals, 1st, and 100th. The whole of the Indians are to remain at Burlington, with some field pieces. Long Point is to be occupied by a strong detachment. The Americans are not to be suffered to establish themselves at any point between Burlington and Fort George, nor are predatory excursions to be suffered as far as Forty Mile Creek. If we are successful here I should approve of your pushing a detachment forward with a view of occupying the territory on the Niagara. It is desirable that expeditions should be undertaken in concert with the Indians, if only with a view of sharing the supplies of that abundant district with the enemy. Assure the Indians that they shall never be abandoned by us." ¹

After General Wilkinson's departure from Niagara, Colonel Winfield Scott succeeded to the command of the regulars left in Fort George and the militia and Indians, supposed to number nearly 3,000, were placed under the orders of Brig. Gen. George McClure. The latter was an Irishman, who had emigrated to the United States at the age of twenty. He first found employment as a carpenter and became successively a contractor, miller, and merchant, settling in the latter occupation at Bath, a thriving town in Western New York. Confident and voluble, he threw himself into politics with ardor and rapidly acquired local influence. As a reward for his services he was appointed to the apparently incongruous offices of Judge of the Surrogate Court and Brigadier-General commanding the eighth brigade of the state militia. He does not appear to have had the slightest acquaintance with military affairs. Like many of his brother officers, he had strange faith in the efficacy of proclamations. In September, 1813, he pompously informed

1. De Rottenburg, Oct. 3, 23, 30; Vincent to De R., Oct. 9, 11, 14, 18, 19.

his brigade that "Your general will lead you to victory and will share the dangers with you." This was quickly followed by a fiery address to the "old and young patriots of the Western district," in which he announced that 1400 men of his brigade had volunteered for service in Canada, 600 of whom were already at Fort George, and added that he wanted "none who had any constitutional scruples about crossing the river."¹

General Porter and Colonel Chapin vied with him in zeal and braggadocio. They obtained permission from the Secretary of War to enlist a volunteer force of 1000 or 1200 men, besides Indians, with which they boldly declared, "we pledge our lives that before the close of the season we will occupy the whole of the valuable and populous peninsula opposite, and either capture, destroy or disperse all the enemy's force in that quarter."²

On the 11th October these vaunting leaders marched out to execute their threats with 1100 men. Their movements were viewed with undisguised contempt by Colonel Scott, who remained behind at Fort George. "There is no danger of their coming up with the enemy," he wrote, "or they would be in great danger of total annihilation. Many of the militia left this with the avowed design of plunder, but I fear from reports that the British have left the miserable inhabitants without anything to be ravished."³

McClure found the bridges broken down and the roads obstructed in many places by trees felled across them, and did not advance beyond the Twenty Mile Creek, whence he proceeded by a circuitous route to Chippawa, permitting his men to gratify their desire for plunder without serious restraint. "The march of McClure from Beaver Dams to Queenston," wrote his colleague Chapin, who soon quarreled with him, "will long be remembered by the distressed victims. Property of almost every description was plundered and buildings burned under the general's own eye." He even intimated that McClure had shared in the spoil. Some of the houses that escaped destruction were deliberately rendered uninhabitable by the removal of the doors and windows. Subsequent incursions only served to harass and exasperate the wretched inhabitants. Scott soon recrossed the river with his regulars and left McClure in sole command.⁴

Among those carried off from their homes as prisoners by Willcocks at this time were Major Thomas Merritt and Captains George Adams and Abraham Nelles. The *Herkimer American* commenting in its issue of 13th January, 1814, on the devastation of the American frontier, quotes the *Manlius Times* as to the lawless conduct of their own troops, which had provoked this mode of retaliation:—"During an armistice when our Government was pledged not to commit an act of hostility, a militia officer, commanding a post on the Niagara, sent a detachment and took as prisoners of war a British guard on Grand Island, sentinels were shot while doing their duty on the other side of the river, and flags of truce were repeatedly fired upon by our sentinels when crossing the river.

1. McMaster Hist. Steuben County; *Buffalo Gazette*, Sept. 10, Oct. 2, 1813. 2. Armstrong Notices, II., 39. Dearborn to Wilkinson, Sept. 22; Porter and Chapin to Wilkinson, Sept. 17. 3. Scott to Wilkinson, Oct. 11, 1813; Chapin in *Ontario Messenger*, 1814; 4. Chapin, Review of Armstrong's Notices; Letters in *Ontario Messenger*; McClure to Secretary of War, Nov. 17.

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"After Fort George was taken by our troops a system of plunder and outrage was adopted and commenced to an extent almost unequalled in the annals of French warfare. Citizens, while peaceably attending to their business, were seized and sent across the river and almost at the same instant their property was destroyed. Those who were paroled and promised protection on suspicion of their possessing moveable property were arrested and their property pillaged. The notorious traitor, Willcocks, was commanded to raise a band of marauders expressly to plunder, burn and destroy."

On the last day of October General Harrison arrived from Detroit with 1000 men, with the intention of assailing Burlington in conjunction with Chauncey's squadron. McClure had 1300 men at his disposal for the expedition, but at the request of Harrison who declared that he was anxious to "proceed with caution and save effusion of blood," he published another call for 1000 volunteers, to assemble there by 10th November. About half that number responded. Snow had fallen to the depth of a foot in the middle of October, but rapidly disappeared and was succeeded by weeks of fine weather. On the 17th November, Harrison embarked his division in ten ships of war and many batteaux, and proceeded as far as the mouth of the Twelve Mile Creek, where he anchored for the night. ¹

Next day he attempted to cross the lake, but a heavy gale dispersed the flotilla, driving one of the largest vessels ashore. McClure, who had advanced by land with his brigade, instantly retired. When the squadron reassembled, it bore away for Sackett's Harbor. ²

Before leaving Fort George, Harrison addressed a letter to General McClure requesting him to resume the command, in which he used the following language:

"The orders which you have hitherto received govern you. It will be necessary that you keep a vigilant eye over the disaffected part of the inhabitants, and I recommend that you make use of the zeal, activity and local knowledge which Colonel Willcocks certainly possesses, to counteract the machinations of our enemy and ensure the confidence of our friends among the inhabitants. It will, however, I am persuaded, be your wish, as it is your duty, to guard the latter as much as possible from oppression." ³

After stating his belief that the British forces were about to retire to York, he advocated the destruction of any supplies they might have collected near Burlington.

Among other instructions received recently by General McClure was the following fateful letter from the Secretary of War, which must have been known to Harrison.

"WAR DEPARTMENT,

October 4th, 1813.

SIR,—Understanding that the *defence* of the post committed to your charge *may* render it proper to destroy the town of Newark, you are hereby

1. Smith, *Complete History*; 6 Ed., p. 101; *Buffalo Gazette*; *Albany Argus*; *New York Post*; *Boston Messenger*; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*. 2. Smith, *Complete History*; *Lossing Field Book*; Cooper; James; McClure to Sec. of War, Nov. 17; De Rottenburg, Nov. 26. 3. Harrison to McClure, Nov. 15.

directed to apprise its inhabitants of this circumstance, and to invite them to remove themselves and their effects to some place of greater safety.

I am, &c., JOHN ARMSTRONG."

For the moment McClure had no thought of standing on the defensive. He was in fact engaged in planning another expedition towards Burlington. The drafted militia under his command, he asserted, were equal to any troops in the United States, and he would take care that they did not remain unemployed. His mounted scouts appear to have advanced within sight of the British outposts at Stoney Creek. He then became convinced that it would be hazardous to attempt anything more ambitious than "desultory excursions," and projected the destruction of "some contiguous mills." Willcocks terrorized all the inhabitants within his reach and carried off to prison many of the most determined loyalists among them. This conduct naturally intensified their hostility, of which so many signal proofs had been already given.¹

It soon appeared that their spirits were not entirely subdued by misfortune. A party of refugees and American militia had appeared in the vicinity of Port Dover, where they made some prisoners and plundered several houses. Lieut.-Colonel Bostwick of the First Norfolk regiment of militia assembled forty-five men, and on the 13th November surprised this band of marauders near Nanticoke, killing three and taking twenty prisoners, with the loss of a single man.²

By this time General Vincent's health had quite broken down and he obtained leave to return to England. He was replaced in command of the division by Major-General Phineas Riall, and Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond superseded De Rottenburg as commander of the forces and administrator of the civil government of the Province. Both of these officers came highly recommended by the Duke of York, then Commander-in-Chief. Drummond in particular had already served several years in Canada, and much was expected from his local knowledge and experience, as well as his characteristic energy and zeal.³

The health of the troops had distinctly improved since their retreat to Burlington, and they were reported to be in excellent spirits, and longing for employment. They were destined soon to be put to the proof. Late in the afternoon of the 29th November, scouts came into the outpost at Stoney Creek with intelligence that Willcocks was out upon a raid, and Colonel John Murray, inspecting field officer, who commanded the advance guard, moved forward towards the "Forty" in hopes of encountering that enterprising and obnoxious partizan. Willcocks avoided a conflict by an abrupt retreat on the main body, and General McClure at once abandoned his projected expedition and retired within his entrenchments. After this his forces melted swiftly away, many deserting. The term of service for which many of his volunteers had enlisted would expire in a few days, and if they went away

1. McClure to Sec. of War, Nov. 21. 2. *Buffalo Gazette*: Examination of Maybee, taken by Bostwick; Bostwick to Vincent, Nov. 14. 3. Duke of York to Sir Geo. Prevost, August 10, 1813.

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ite them he would be left to depend solely upon the detachments of regulars and a
ty. small body of drafted men.¹

“RONG.” Having learned that the garrisons of regular soldiers in Forts George and
defensive. Niagara had been diminished by the movement of troops to Sackett’s Harbor,
Arlington. and relieved of all apprehension of an attack on Montreal by the withdrawal
any troops of General Wilkinson’s army into winter quarters, the Governor-General
t remain directed Drummond to hold his right division in readiness to “act with
sight of promptitude when required to take advantage of the weakness or negligence
d that it of the enemy.”²

desultory Vincent’s last act before turning over the command to General Riall was
ls.” Will- to send a detachment of regulars to re-occupy Turkey Point and support the
to prison the Norfolk militia in their gallant resistance to the marauders. At the same
naturally time the Royal Scots and 100th were pushed forward to the Forty Mile
n already Creek, where they were quartered in farm houses and barns. On the 7th
December Colonel Murray obtained permission to reconnoitre as far as the
Twelve with about 500 men and two field guns, moving his infantry in sleighs
collected for the purpose.*³

Preparatory to this movement, the dragoons and Indians, guided by
Captain W. H. Merritt whose intimate knowledge of the country was invaluable, scoured the roads for three days and made several prisoners besides
assembled capturing a quantity of supplies that had been collected by the enemy’s
marauders foraging parties. The country between the lines was at the mercy of small
e loss of a bands of lawless men, and from the reports of the prisoners and others it
n and he seemed evident that it was the intention of the American general to
nd of the devastate the entire district from the Twelve Mile Creek to the Niagara
ir Gordon River, and strip the inhabitants of the scanty remainder of their cattle and
forces and grain. So many isolated farm houses had already been wantonly burned
of these that this rumor did not seem in the least improbable. General McClure’s
mmander- division was also stated to be much weakened by desertion and in a bad state
years in of discipline.⁴

retreat to Murray promptly determined to exceed his instructions, and make a bold
d longing dash at Fort George. At the Twenty Mile Creek, on the morning of the
Late in 10th, he dispersed a scouting party of Willcocks’s mounted infantry, killing
at Stoney one and taking four prisoners. The fugitives increased the panic that
nel John already prevailed in the American camp by reporting that one of their
r, moved captured comrades had been given up to their tender mercies of the Indians.

* Royal Artillery, one 6 pounder, one 5½ inch howitzer.	
19th Dragoons	25 rank and file, Cornet Huson.
Provincial Dragoons	14 rank and file, Captain Merritt.
100th Regiment	340 rank and file, Lieut.-Col. Hamilton.
Volunteers	20 rank and file, Capts. Wilson and Kerby.
Indians	70 rank and file, Col. Matthews Elliott and Capt. Caldwell.

1. McClure to Sec. of War, Dec. 13; Ibid to the Public, Jan. 1, 1814. 2. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, Dec. 22, 1813; Ibid, Jan. 6, 1814. 3. De Rottenburg to Vincent, Oct. 30; Vincent to De R., Nov. 15; Drummond to Prevost, Dec. 6. 4. Merritt’s Journal; James, Mil. Occ.; Murray to Vincent, Dec. 13.

The time of service of a majority of the volunteer militia had expired the day before, and although a considerable bounty was offered to induce them to re-enlist not more than fifty would then agree to remain. The rest fairly became mutinous when they found that the whole of their pay was not forthcoming. "The best and most subordinate militia that have yet been on this frontier," General McClure wrote to the Secretary of War, "finding that their wages were not ready for them, became, with some meritorious exceptions, a disaffected and ungovernable multitude." When they had recrossed the river, if he may be believed, the garrison of Fort George was reduced to less than one hundred men. When Scott marched away, six weeks before, he stated that he left it complete as a field work, with ten pieces of artillery mounted on the walls. McClure now hurriedly convened a council of war and submitted the question whether the fort was tenable with the force at his disposal. The members unanimously replied that it was not. He of course determined to abandon it, but before doing so gave orders for the immediate destruction of the village of Niagara, or rather such part of it as had escaped the perils of the previous campaigns. This resolution seems to have been actuated partly by a desire to punish the inhabitants for their active and persistent loyalty, and partly by the hope of depriving the British troops of shelter near the river, but McClure confidently justified it by referring to the Secretary's letter of the 4th October, already cited.¹

"The village of Newark is now in flames," he said in a letter to Armstrong, "the few remaining inhabitants having been notified of our intention, were enabled to remove their property. The houses were generally vacant long before. This step has not been taken without counsel, and is in conformity with the views of Your Excellency disclosed to me in a former communication, the enemy now are completely shut out from the hopes or means of wintering in the vicinity of Fort George."²

Had that object been really attained, it is scarcely probable that McClure's conduct would have provoked the censure of his superior, but the swift and merciless retaliation that followed raised a storm of indignation throughout the United States, and the Secretary of War then attempted to screen himself by asserting that the general had misinterpreted his instructions. He had authorized him to burn the village only in case it was deemed necessary for the defence of the fort, but McClure had burned it and then run away.³

At four o'clock in the morning of the 10th, when the American general must still have intended to retain possession of Fort George, some of the inhabitants were aroused from sleep and informed that in two hours their

1. McClure to Tompkins, Nov. 21, Dec. 10, 11; Ibid to Sec. of War, Dec. 10; Scott to Sec. of War, Dec. 31.

2. McClure to Sec. of War, Dec. 10.

3. General John Armstrong to Governor Tompkins, 20th Dec., 1813:

"McClure had not, as you suppose, authority for doing anything that he did. If he could not hold Fort George, destroy it, but then let him take care of his principal fortress. This was particularly his business. But away he runs to Buffalo and then finds the enemy at Lewiston and Niagara in danger. He hints that Niagara was destroyed by my orders. This is a great error. My orders were to burn it if necessary to the defence of Fort George, and not otherwise. But he does not defend Fort George and then burns Niagara. My orders were given on the report of the general that the attack of Fort George might be covered by Newark."

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dwellings would be burnt. Several profited by the warning and removed their furniture, but many were slow to believe it, particularly when the appointed hour passed and there was no appearance of the threat being carried into execution. Nearly all the younger men were absent; some serving in the militia at Burlington, others prisoners in the United States. In the course of the day snow began to fall and the wind rose to a gale. It was nearly dark when the parties detailed for the purpose sallied from the fort and began the work of destruction. Chapin publicly asserted that "McClure, aided by that perjured villain, Joseph Willcocks, actually led his men through the town setting fire to houses." Be this as it may, the conflagration was rapid and complete. According to the Governor General's manifesto, justifying subsequent acts of retaliation, 150 buildings were destroyed and 400 "helpless women and children" rendered homeless. Another account states that 80 dwellings were burnt in the village and 18 in the immediate vicinity. Only one house escaped. Although the wife of William Dickson, a well-known lawyer and pronounced loyalist, then a prisoner in Fort Niagara, was ill in bed, the house was not spared in consequence. The incendiaries seized the bed containing the sick woman and set it down on the snow in the street outside, whence she witnessed the entire destruction of her home with all its contents, including a collection of books which had cost her husband £600 in England. Several others were too ill to walk and two women had actually given birth to children the night before. Fortunately a few farm houses remained standing about four miles distant. To these the wretched fugitives directed their flight, but they were insufficient to shelter so many persons, and some were compelled to travel eight or ten miles further in the face of a blinding snowstorm. ¹ *

The flames of the burning building were soon seen by some of Murray's scouts, and the news was swiftly carried to the main body, which had halted after crossing the Twelve. The whole column was instantly put in motion, raising the militia and collecting axes and ladders for the assault of the fort as it went along. The sight of forlorn groups of women and children by the roadside filled the soldiers with rage as they approached the place, which they reached about nine o'clock at night. The fortifications were found deserted but intact. They had recently been so much strengthened that Murray reported them capable of sustaining a regular siege. After removing one or two light guns, the garrison had tumbled the rest of their artillery into the ditch, where it was discovered next morning. The arsenal had been burnt and the principal magazine blown up, but several smaller magazines with their contents were absolutely uninjured. So precipitate was their retreat that tents for fifteen hundred men were left standing. So far from de-

¹ There was little disposition to justify General McClure's act in the United States. "Among the people at the Court Meeting (Oct. 25th, 1816), was the militia General McClure," writes Lieut. Francis Hall in his *Travels* p. p. 250-1. "He keeps a store at Bath. He had lately been cast in \$1400 damages at Canandaigua in an action brought by an inhabitant of Newark for the destruction of his property. Being on one occasion recognized at a public auction mart at Philadelphia he was hooted out of the room."

1. Merritt; James; Bishop Strachan's Letter to Jefferson; Letters of Veritas; Chapin in *Ontario Messenger*, 1814.

priving his pursuers of shelter, a range of new barracks here and another at Chippawa were abandoned by McClure ready for occupation. Even then they were so close at his heels that ten of his men who lagged behind were made prisoners. The ordnance taken formed a prize of no small importance. * 1

"I trust the indefatigable exertions of this handful of men," Murray wrote, "have rendered an essential service to the country by rescuing from a merciless enemy the inhabitants of an extensive and highly cultivated tract of land stored with cattle, grain and provisions of every description, and it must be an exultation to them to find themselves delivered from the oppression of a lawless banditti composed of the disaffected of the country, organized under the direct influence of the American Government, who caused terror and dismay unto every family."

Next day detachments in sleighs were sent out to scour the country in search of the predatory bands that had so long annoyed the inhabitants. As they moved up the river road the American batteries at Lewiston opened fire with red hot shot upon the defenceless village of Queenston, with the obvious design of destroying it like Niagara. On the 12th, Captain James Kerby, with a few militia and Indians, reoccupied Fort Erie. A party of American militia was surprised in the act of recrossing the river. The pilot of the ferry boat being shot dead by an Indian, it was taken, with about twenty prisoners. 2

On the same day Lieut.-Gen. Drummond reached York, where he was informed of Colonel Murray's unexpected success. He pressed forward by forced marches, and on the 16th arrived at St. Davids, where he established his headquarters. 3

General McClure appears to have partially recovered from his panic as soon as he had fairly put the river behind him. On the 11th he issued a requisition for another draft of 1000 men from the adjacent militia district, which he had just received from the Governor of the State. He put Captain Leonard, the senior artillery officer, in command of Fort Niagara, where he had a garrison of nearly 400 regular soldiers, consisting of two companies of artillery and two of the 24th United States Infantry. Col. Grieves, of the 7th New York Artillery, was sent with two guns to Lewiston, with instructions to bombard Queenston and destroy the few remaining houses in that much battered hamlet. Willcocks was posted off to Washington to seek some reward for his treason, but Mallory with his regiment of Canadian volunteers was stationed at Schlosser. General Porter was required to call out all the Indians and local militia for the defence of Black Rock. "The enemy," McClure wrote, "is much exasperated and will make a descent on this frontier if possible, but I shall watch them close until a reinforcement of militia and volunteers arrive, when I shall endeavor to repossess myself of

* Two twelve pounders, five nine pounders, 750 twelve pound shot, 1307 nine pound shot, 1055 six pound shot, 37 four pound shot, 74 twelve pound grape shot, one nine pounder garrison carriage, one twelve pounder limber, three six pounder limbers, two tumbrils.

1. Merritt Journal; Murray to Vincent, Dec. 13, Lossing. 2. McClure to Sec. of War, Dec. 13; Buffalo Gazette, Recollections Lewis of Palmer. 3. Drummond to Prevost, Dec. 18.

Fort George and drive them back to Burlington." He kept his pledge of vigilance by the instant removal of his headquarters to Buffalo, thirty-five miles distant, where an attack seemed least probable, and ordered 200 regulars to advance from Canandaigua to that place.¹

His statements as to the number of his troops are shown by official returns to be quite untrustworthy.

Preparations for crossing the river had been begun by Colonel Murray on his own responsibility immediately after recovering Fort George, but the difficulty of finding comfortable quarters for his men in bitterly cold weather caused some delay. The enemy had destroyed or removed all the rivercraft, and but two boats fit for use could be found on the spot. The Lincoln militia, however, burning for revenge on the spoiler of their homes, eagerly volunteered to bring down a sufficient number of batteaux from Burlington. The night of the 17th was actually fixed for the passage of the river, and the troops were kept under arms for several hours, but a heavy gale had delayed some of the boats and the passage was postponed. Meanwhile several non-combatants who had been deported to the United States in June, and detained there in confinement ever since, were imprudently released on parole and allowed to return to Niagara. From them Drummond obtained valuable information respecting the position and numbers of the American troops, and framed his plans accordingly. On the other hand, in spite of every precaution to ensure secrecy, rumors of the projected attack on Fort Niagara reached the enemy and on the nights of the 17th and 18th the garrison of that place was actually kept under arms expecting it. On the 18th General McClure published another address to the militia of Niagara, Genesee and Chatauqua counties, requesting every man who was able to bear arms to come to his support. "The enemy," he declared, "are now laying waste their own country. Every man who does not take up arms or who are disposed to remain neutral, are inhumanly butchered, their property plundered and their buildings destroyed. Information has just been received that six or eight of their most respectable inhabitants between Queenston and Fort George have fallen victims to their barbarity. . . . What then, fellow citizens, have you to expect from such an enemy should they invade your frontier?" "Since the above was prepared," he added by way of postscript, "I have received intelligence by a credible inhabitant from Canada (who has just escaped from thence) that the enemy are concentrating all their forces and boats at Fort George, and have fixed upon to-morrow night for attacking Fort Niagara, and should they succeed they will lay waste our whole frontier."²

The same day Colonel Murray received final instructions for the assault. At St. Davids, nestled among the hills, the troops could be assembled without attracting attention on the other bank. A sufficient number of boats lay concealed in the ravine of the Two Mile Run to carry over in two

1. McClure to Gov. Tompkins, Dec. 12; Col. W. Scott to Secretary of War, Dec. 31; Armstrong; James' Mil. Occ. 2. Drummond to Prevost, Dec. 18. Merritt, Journal.

trips a storming party which consisted of 562* men, besides a detachment of militia volunteers bearing ladders and axes. They were directed to land at the Five Mile Meadow and move at once against the outlying picket at Youngstown.

"The men must be silent and not load without orders, and rely chiefly on the bayonet," read the order. The remainder of the regulars and the whole of the Indians would immediately cross the river in support. Colonel Elliott was directed to warn the Indians to abstain from plunder and acts of violence to women and children. "I cannot consent to employ them," said Drummond, "except on this condition."¹

The garrison of the fort at this time consisted of about 430 officers and men, all regular soldiers, about fifty of whom were ineffective from sickness.[†]

Twenty-seven pieces of cannon were mounted on the bastions and on the flat roofs of three stone towers and a range of barracks within. An attempt to carry the place by escalade had apparently been apprehended from the first by General McClure. Hand grenades were stored in the block houses ready for use, and the companies had been assigned the positions they were to occupy in case of an assault. If they were unable to defend the outworks they were to retire to the towers and barracks. But the fear of an attack had now quite subsided, and before midnight Captain Leonard rode off to visit his family at a farm house two miles away.²

At 10 p. m. Murray's column left St. Davids and marched silently through the woods to the boats. The passage of the river was accomplished in faultless order, and the "forlorn hope" of twenty veteran soldiers, chosen specially for this grim work, headed by Lieut. Dawson and Sergeant Spearman of the 100th, pressed stealthily forward to surprise the advance piquet, which was quartered in a large tavern at Youngstown, with the merciless instructions that every man in it must be put to death. The ground was covered with a light blanket of snow which rendered their approach absolutely noiseless, and the intense cold had driven even the sentries inside. The house was quietly surrounded and on peering through the windows it was seen that many of the party were asleep and the remainder playing cards. The entire piquet paid the penalty of their almost incredible negligence with their lives. The watchword for the night was first extorted from these unhappy men and they were then pitilessly stabbed to death. A second piquet in a house about half way between Youngstown

*Royal Artillery.....	12
Grenadier Co. Royals	100
Flank Companies, 41st	100
100th Regiment.....	350
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562

†Morning report of Garrison of Fort Niagara, 15th Dec., 1813:

Capt. Leonard's Co., present	74 rank and file, absent.....	19
Capt. Hampton's Co., present.....	88 rank and file, absent.....	17
Lieut. Peak's Co., present.....	118 rank and file, absent.....	9
Lieut. Frederick's Co., present	44 rank and file, absent.....	0
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1. Col. J. Harvey, Instructions to Col. Murray, Dec. 18. 2. McClure to the Public, Jan. 1st, 1814; Gen. Cass to Secretary of War, 12th Jan., 1814; Niles' Register, Buffalo Gazette, 1814.

and the fort, was surprised and dispatched in a similar manner, not a man escaping. These two piquets were composed of about forty men. ¹

Arrangements were then completed for the assault of the fort in three columns. The principal attack, directed against the main gate and adjacent works, was headed by Lieut. Dawson's forlorn hope, followed by the grenadiers of the 100th under Captain Fawcett, twelve men of the Royal Artillery, bearing hand grenades, commanded by Lieut. Charlton, and five companies of the 100th, led by Lieut.-Col. Hamilton. This column was guided by Captain Elliott, of the Quartermaster General's department, and supported by the flank companies of the 41st under Lieut. Bullock. Three companies of the 100th, under Captain Martin, were detailed to assault the eastern demi-bastion, and the grenadiers of the Royal Scots, under Captain Bailey, were directed to escalate the salient angle. These detachments were piloted by Captain Kerby and Lieuts. Ball, Servos and Hamilton, of the Lincoln militia. Captain John Norton, the Mohawk chief, also accompanied the storming party as a volunteer. ²

Having lost a leg in Holland, many years before, Lieut.-Col. Hamilton was unable to accompany his regiment on foot. As he obstinately insisted on leading it into action on every occasion, a horse had been ferried over with great difficulty, and this animal now nearly caused the discovery of their approach. Arms were carried at "the shoulder" to diminish the chances of their clashing and the march was accomplished very quietly until the head of the main column had nearly reached the ditch, when the Colonel's horse neighed loudly and was answered with startling shrillness by another from a stable inside the gate. The whole party stood still in breathless dismay, but to their relief no sound of alarm was heard within. Much to their surprise the drawbridge was down, and as they gazed the gate was thrown open, and the guard marched out to relieve the sentries at the water side. The gate remained open. Sergeant Spearman, a man of huge size and great strength, advanced across the bridge alone. When he reached the entrance, a sentry came out of his box and challenged. Spearman promptly gave the watchword, and added that he came with a message from Youngstown. As the man turned he sprang upon him, and before he could cry out or defend himself, strangled him in his iron grasp. With a mighty cheer the storming party surged through the open gateway and hunted the remainder of the guard around the barrack square. Their ignorance of the internal arrangements of the fort gave the garrison time to get under arms. A cannon was fired into the square from the roof of the south-western tower, followed by a few scattered musket shots. Lieut. Nolan, of the 100th, instantly forced open the door and disappeared in the darkness. The momentary clash of steel was succeeded by several shots. When his men reached the scene of conflict Nolan lay stone dead with four shot wounds and a bayonet thrust in his body. Beside him lay three American soldiers, two of them dying from sword cuts and the third disabled by a

1. Murray to Drummond, Dec. 19th; Drummond to Prevost, Dec. 19th; J. Le Moine, Maple Leaves; J. Holmes, in *Literary Garland*, April, 1840. 2. Murray to Drummond; Drummond to Prevost.

bullet from the pistol that was still clinched in the dead officer's hand. Some of the inmates were killed by the exasperated grenadiers before they could be restrained. ¹

Brevet-Major Davis of the same regiment led his company, consisting of only thirty-seven men, against the southern tower, which was at first very resolutely defended. An incessant though random fire killed five and wounded two of his men in the first attack.

Conceiving it of vital importance to dislodge them as quickly as possible, Davis retired his company into the shelter of a neighboring storehouse until the enemy's fire ceased, and he supposed that they were engaged in reloading. Then seizing a prisoner he threatened him with instant death if he failed to guide him to the entrance, and, giving a signal to his men to follow, rushed forward a second time. The door was soon battered in, and the men in the lower story ran upstairs, closely followed by their assailants, some of whom by their officer's command had snatched burning sticks from the fireplace to light them in pursuit. Others calling for scaling ladders, and Davis himself shouting at the top of his voice to bayonet the fugitives without mercy, the panic-stricken garrison begged for quarter and surrendered to the number of sixty-four, only one of them being killed in this brief struggle. ² All resistance then ceased. A crowd of fugitives from the barracks and mess house attempted to escape from the fort by the sally-port, but they were met and driven back by the grenadiers of the Royal Scots. Col. Murray hastened to the spot, and saved the lives of most of these men by making them lie down, but received a wound in the hand in his merciful effort. However, not many were killed inside the fort. Including the two piquets the dead numbered sixty-five and the wounded sixteen, all by the bayonet. Fourteen officers and 330 men were taken prisoners, and about twenty are said to escaped by climbing over the palisades, some of whom were quite badly wounded. The loss of the storming party was trifling. Lieut. Nolan and five privates of the 100th were killed; Col. Murray, Assistant Surgeon Ogilvie of the Royal Artillery, two men of the 100th and one of the 41st, were wounded.* Eight Canadians and several Indian prisoners were released. † The quantity of stores found in the fort was very great and of inestimable value to the captors at this particular time, when they were very bare of supplies. There were twenty-nine pieces of artillery, seven thousand muskets and rifles, and a great variety of ordnance stores. Seven thousand pairs of shoes, the clothing of the 8th and 49th regiments, which had been captured on a transport on Lake Ontario, in June, 1813, and a vast quantity of clothing and equipments for the American

*Official return of killed, wounded and prisoners in the garrison of Fort Niagara: Killed, 65; wounded, 1 lieutenant, 1 assistant surgeon, 14 rank and file; prisoners, 1 captain, 9 lieutenants, 2 ensigns, 1 surgeon, 1 commissary, 12 sergeants, 318 rank and file. The whole belong to the artillery or the line.

†James (Mil. Occ., Vol. II, page 18) gives the names of Thomas Dickson, Samuel Street, J. M. Caudle, John Thompson, John Macfarlane and Peter MacMicking, the latter being 80 years of age.

1. Murray; Holmes; Le Moine. 2. Davis to Murray.

army, formed an even more acceptable prize. Altogether the value of the property captured was estimated at more than a million of dollars * ¹

At dawn the light-hearted Irish soldiers of the 100th were dancing on the flat roof of the barracks to the lively strains of "St. Patrick's Day," when Sir Gordon Drummond rode through the gate. He instantly ordered the storming party to be formed up on the barrack square, and warmly thanked officers and men for their good conduct. An hour or two later, Captain Leonard returned from his visit and surrendered himself.

General Riall had meanwhile crossed the river with 1000 regulars and militia and nearly 500 Western Indians directed by the veterans Matthew Elliott and William Caldwell, who had led the same tribes at the Blue Licks and Sandusky in the Revolution and in many a bloody combat in the present war.† At five o'clock a single cannon shot from Fort Niagara conveyed the welcome tidings that that fortress was in Murray's possession, and the march to Lewiston was begun. The force stationed there under Major Bennett consisted of a weak regiment of New York State Artillery, numbering 7 officers and 120 men with two guns, and 47 Tuscarora Indians from the neighboring reserve. As soon as he found his position seriously threatened, Bennett summoned Mallory's battalion of Canadian Volunteers to his aid from Schlosser. His whole force did not then exceed 300, and was rapidly diminished by desertion. He set fire to the public buildings and attempted to carry off his guns by the Ridge Road. But, being sharply attacked by the light troops and the Indians, these were abandoned and the Americans dispersed in every direction, leaving seventeen dead on the field and a few prisoners. Unhappily the Indians broke the solemn pledge exacted from them before crossing the river, and committed numerous outrages. Not only did they ransack and burn every house in sight, including the Tuscarora village, but they seem to have killed and wounded some of the unresisting inhabitants. The entire number of persons killed has been stated by one writer at forty-six, but this is an evident exaggeration. ² Twenty-seven women and children were rescued from their hands by the British regulars, one of whom was actually killed by them while protecting the prisoners from their fury. ³ One six and one twelve pounder, a quantity of small arms, nine barrels of powder and 200 barrels of provisions were captured. ⁴

Parties were sent out to range the country in different directions during the next few days. Several boats loaded with military stores were taken at the Four Mile Creek. The mills at the Eighteen Mile and Oak Orchard Creeks, which had supplied flour to the United States army, were next destroyed.

*Brass guns: ten six-pounders, three four-pounders, one three-pounder, two eight inch howitzers two ten inch mortars. Iron guns: three eighteen pounders, three twelve-pounders, four six-pounders, one one-and-a-half pounder, 140 English bayonets, 1800 French bayonets, 7200 French muskets, 10 cwt. buckshot, 52 cwt. of lead.

†8th Regt. and 89th Light Co., 250; 41st, Grenadiers, 100th, 250; Royal Scots, 400; Militia, 100.

1. Murray, Dec. 19; Drummond, Dec. 19. 2. C. P. Turner, *Dark Days on the Frontier*, p. 10. 3. Drummond to Prevost, Dec. 20; Bennett's letter in *Albany Argus*, Jan., 1814. 4. James' *Mil. Occ.*, vol. II, 19.

with most of the houses along the lake. The inhabitants who were the principal sufferers on this occasion admitted, however, that the officers in command executed the harsh task of retaliation with as much lenity as could be expected. "Seldom," says the local historian, "has there been a more peaceable march of invaders through a conquered territory. The orders of the officer from his superior were stringent and even sanguinary, but he managed to discharge his duty according to the dictates of humanity. In several instances he ordered his own men to assist in removing the most necessary articles of household furniture before firing houses; and when the mill of Judge Van Horn was fired he ordered several barrels of flour to be rolled out for the use of the families he had reluctantly made destitute."¹

On the 21st it was learned that a small force was still assembled at Manchester and Schlosser for the defence of the mills and storehouses, and General Riall moved against it with the Royal Scots and 41st, and a few Indians. The Americans, who were commanded by Mallory, retreated after a slight skirmish, leaving Lieut. Low, of the 23rd U. S. Infantry, mortally wounded, and another officer and seven men prisoners. General Porter's mills and ropewalk, and the public storehouse, containing a large quantity of hay and grain, were destroyed at Manchester, and at Schlosser the blockhouse, barracks and storehouse, with several large boats and scows. The pursuit was continued as far as Tonawanda Creek, where the only bridge was destroyed by Mallory. All the remaining houses between Schlosser and Lewiston were then burnt, and Riall retired to the Canadian side of the river, leaving a garrison of 500 men in Fort Niagara.²

The Indians retired to Burlington to divide their plunder with their families, and as the weather daily grew colder Drummond was reluctantly constrained to give his weary soldiers a few days's rest, for none of them had either fur caps or mitts, and some were even without greatcoats. He felt confident of his ability to take Buffalo, and began to plan the re-conquest of Michigan. "Detroit and the whole of the west could be re-occupied if I only had men, without difficulty," he wrote on the 22nd December. "We ought to use a well-equipped force, not one that is harassed and disorganized as this is, without field train, artificers, engineers, and commissariat, to obtain and maintain communications with the western Indians."

On the 19th General McClure retired from Buffalo with the regulars under his command to Miller's Tavern at Cold Spring, about three miles distant on the road to Batavia. On the 20th he directed General Hopkins to take command at Buffalo, while he declared his intention of proceeding with the regulars to the relief of Fort Niagara, which was said to be in "imminent danger."

The destruction of Lewiston was then known to him, but not the capture of the fort. In response to his requisition, General Hopkins had called out his brigade with very slight success. The next day McClure wrote to the Governor that 400 militia had come in, "but they are more engaged in taking

1. Turner, *Hist. Holland Purchase*. 2. Drummond to Prevost, Dec. 22; *Buffalo Gazette*. *Albany Argus*; *Niles' Register*; *Boston Messenger*.

care of their families than in helping us to fight. I leave General Hopkins in command at Buffalo, while I go with 100 regulars and some Indians to cut our way if possible into Fort Niagara. That point is in imminent danger, not 200 men there and all our arms and ammunition. The last campaign has been conducted in such a manner that I shall beg leave to retire as soon as I can be relieved. My whole force is not a major's command." It is quite evident that he kept well out of danger, for on the 22nd he informed the Governor from Buffalo that he had called out the militia of Niagara, Genesee and Chautauqua counties *en masse*. On the same day he caused his aide-de-camp to reply to a letter written by Colonel Harvey from York on the 14th, by instruction of General Drummond, to inquire whether "the atrocious act of burning Newark" was done by the authority of his Government, that he was "only accountable to his Government for any act of procedure while in command. As respects the atrocity of the act of burning Newark (as you please to call it), you will certainly admit that it is not without a precedent. He needs only to remind you of Havre de Grace, Frenchtown, Sodus, etc., etc., long previous to the conflagration of Newark."

On the 23rd he seized the pen himself to protest against the devastation of the frontier he had so signally failed to protect, in a letter addressed to General Vincent:

"I would direct your view to the desolated village of Lewiston; the wanton massacre of unoffending and unresisting citizens, men, women and children, deliberately butchered in cold blood by your savage allies and under your eye. The blood of these citizens calls for vengeance," he continued in his usual declamatory vein, "and I am constrained to declare that hereafter it will be my duty, in imitation of your barbarous policy, to yield to war all its horrors by retaliating those wrongs which you have wantonly inflicted."

Vincent was then some hundreds of miles away, but Harvey promptly replied at considerable length:

"That some excesses were committed the Lieutenant-General admits and sincerely laments," Drummond bade him write. "At the same time, he has the satisfaction of knowing that every effort and exertion was used by Major-General Riall and the officers and soldiers of the British force under his command to restrain these excesses. You, sir, however, can but be aware of the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of effectually controlling an infuriated band of savages. Major-General Riall and the officers under his command did, however, afford effectual protection to all who remained in their houses. A British soldier, a sentinel, lost his life in defending a female, an inhabitant, and no less than nine women and eighteen children saved by the intrepidity of the Major-General and the troops from the savage fury of the Indians, and now in safety on our frontier, sufficiently attest the anxious desire of the British troops and their commander to alleviate as much as possible to the peaceful inhabitants the dreadful evils of a mode of warfare to which the example of the American Government had compelled us to have recourse.

"I allude as well to the employment of Indians by the American

generals beyond their own frontier as to the burning of Niagara, in which a number of old and infirm persons were left to perish in the snow, an act which, the season of the year and all other circumstances considered, is unexampled in barbarity." ¹

By this time General McClure had become utterly discredited among his own men and thought proper to retire to Batavia, taking with him the whole of his regular force, in disregard of the remonstrances of many of the inhabitants. He then informed the Secretary of War that it would be necessary to send a force of regulars to prevent the British from penetrating into the interior of the State. The militia would not act without them. His own brigade, which he had formerly praised so highly, "ultimately proved to be very little better than an infuriated mob." This he ascribed to the conduct of the officers, who were seeking popularity and would not enforce discipline. He concluded by a bitter complaint against his old friend Chapin. "Since dismissing him and his marauding corps, he has been guilty of the most outrageous acts of mutiny if not of *treason*. When I came to Buffalo, accompanied only by my suite, he headed a mob for the purpose of doing violence to my feelings and person, and when marching to the Rock at the time of an alarm, five or six guns were discharged at me by his men." ² The regular officers of his staff seem to have fully shared his resentment against the inhabitants of Buffalo, as several of them openly expressed their hopes that the place would be destroyed, even in the hearing of the militia advancing to its defence, a sentiment certainly not calculated to raise their spirits.

The alarm spread with great rapidity. At Auburn it was reported that British troops had already advanced to the Genesee, and a court-martial sitting there hastily broke up. The militia were called out *en masse* as far eastward as Cayuga, and marched towards the frontier as fast as they could be assembled. In utter disgust with McClure, the Secretary of War wrote to the Governor of New York, "Relieve the man. But what of Hall? Of him the report formerly was not good." Long before this letter could reach its destination, this had actually been done and General Amos Hall had assumed command at Buffalo. ³

His military experience had been acquired as a sergeant in the Revolution. Of late years he had kept a tavern at Canandaigua, and had grown wealthy and influential. ⁴ * On arriving in Buffalo on the 26th of December he found about 2000 militia there, according to his own account, but a private letter written the same day estimated the entire number of troops assembled on the frontier at 3000, and added confidently, "in a few days we shall have 5000, all determined to cross into Canada and retaliate." ⁵

*The innkeepers of America are in most villages what we vulgarly call 'topping men,' field officers of militia with good farms attached to their taverns so that they are apt to think what perhaps in a newly settled country is not very wide of the truth, that travellers rather receive than confer a favor by being accommodated at their houses.—Hall's Travels in the U. S. and Canada 1816, p. 57.

1. Harvey to McClure, 27th Dec., 1813. 2. McClure to Secretary of War, Dec., 25. 3. J. A. Spencer to Tompkins, 26th Dec.; Armstrong to Tompkins, Dec. 26th. 4. Sutcliffe, Travels in America. 5. Hall to Tompkins Dec. 26th; Albany *Argus*.

Drummond appears to have been faithfully served by his spies and scouts, and quietly continued his preparations for crossing the river again. The great depth of the snowdrifts delayed the work of conveying the boats around the Falls, and it was not until the 26th that he succeeded, by immense exertions, in launching ten at Chippawa. He determined to attempt the passage of the river on the following night. But the Indians had failed to return from Burlington, and a body of Americans unexpectedly appeared at Lewiston. He was that day joined by 200 of the 8th and 60 of the 89th, who had marched directly from Kingston, and small bands of Indians also came forward. During the night a scouting party crossed the river and brought off as prisoners two cavalry vedettes from a tavern below Black Rock. This exploit caused an extraordinary commotion in the American camp.¹ On the 28th Drummond published a general order directing the troops to be in readiness to embark on the night of the 29th. After observing that the corps he intended to employ had always been distinguished for courage and discipline, and that having served in each of them himself he took more than ordinary interest in their success, the order said:

"The service they are going upon is an arduous one, for though the enemy they will have to encounter be undisciplined and composed almost entirely of militia, yet he is numerous and highly exasperated. The troops must therefore depend wholly, not only for their success, but even for their safety, on their bravery and discipline; a relaxation in the latter may be as fatal as even deficiency in the former quality. The Lieut.-General most strongly enjoins the troops *never to throw away their fire*; when they do give it, let it be with regularity and consequently with effect. But the bayonet is the weapon most formidable in the hands of British soldiers, and he earnestly hopes that on it they will place their principal dependence on the present occasion.

"Any soldier leaving his ranks for the purpose of plunder is liable to be shot on the spot. The captured property belongs not to any individual, but to all.

"Intoxication in the presence of the enemy, let it be remembered, is not only the most disgraceful, but the most dangerous crime a soldier can commit. The man who wilfully disqualifies himself for meeting the enemy, by whatever means, cannot be considered a brave man."

The force designated for the attack and placed under the immediate command of Major-General Riall, consisted of 965 regular infantry, fifty militia and 400 Indians.* Riall was instructed to cross with two-thirds of his troops below Squaw Island, and the remainder on a preconcerted signal were to pass the river between Black Rock and Buffalo. After taking the batteries and dispersing the troops at Black Rock, they were to march upon Buffalo in two divisions, one by the Lake Road and the other by the road

*1st Royal Scots, 370; 8th Kings, 240; 41st, 2nd Battalion, 250; Light Company, 89th, 55; Grenadiers, 100th, 50; militia, 50; Indians, 400.

1. Drummond to Prevost, Dec. 22; Ibid, Dec. 26.

leading to the Eleven Mile Creek, Williamsville, where the Americans had a military post. If the enemy seemed likely to rally they were to be pursued to the latter place. Parties were to be detailed for the destruction of four vessels of the Lake Erie squadron which lay fast in the ice at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, but provisions and supplies of all kinds must be carefully preserved. "The Indians must be restrained, the persons and property of the inhabitants protected, and all the liquor is to be destroyed to prevent it falling into the hands of the troops." ¹

The position occupied by General Hall was undoubtedly strong. With a broad and rapid river in front and deep though sluggish creeks on either flank, it was remarkably difficult of access. The high steep clay banks afforded excellent sites for batteries, of which there were four, so arranged as to sweep all parts of the river from the Buffalo Creek to Black Rock with a cross fire of heavy artillery. On these were mounted eleven guns, several of them 24 and 32 pounders, and an eight-inch mortar. ²

On the 27th an official return showed that the militia at Black Rock and Buffalo numbered 1711 rank and file.* There were besides probably four or five hundred regular infantry, artillery, and seamen, under their own officers, over whom General Hall expressly stated that he assumed no control. On the 29th a regiment of militia, three hundred strong, under Lieut.-Col. McMahon, marched in from Chautauqua County. The arrival of further reinforcements is not recorded, but General Cass asserted that the number of militia present at the time of the attack was between 2500 and 3000. There is, however, no reason to question General Hall's statement that "they were disorganized and confused and everything wore the appearance of consternation and dismay." As usual, they were boastful and insubordinate. ³

About midnight Riall succeeded in crossing below Squaw Island unopposed and undiscovered, taking with him the detachments of the 8th, 41st, 89th and 100th, and followed by the greater part of the Indians. Moving forward in the dark, the advance guard surprised the American pickets and gained possession of the bridge over Shogeoquady Creek before the guard posted there had time to destroy it, although they found the planks loosened in readiness to be removed. A battery of three guns pointed to sweep the approaches to the bridge and manned by sailors from the gunboats was then carried at a rush, after a single random discharge of artillery. A halt was then made to enable the main body, which was still struggling among the

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1. Instructions to General Riall, Dec. 29; Drummond to Prevost, Jan. 2, 1813. 2. Drummond, Jan. 2; Ketchum, Hist. of Buffalo. 3. Hall to Tompkins, 6th Jan.

thickets in the marshy ground near the river, to come up, and also to give time for the co-operation of the other column. ¹

The detachment detailed for the more dangerous task of crossing the river in the face of the batteries was composed of 370 men of the Royal Scots and fifty militia, under the command of Lieut.-Col. John Gordon, Lieuts. Anderson, Davis and Putman of the Lincoln militia, who were acquainted with the river, had gallantly volunteered to pilot the boats, a service of much danger and difficulty. They performed their duty thoroughly well, but owing to some misunderstanding on the part of their men, the boats were brought in the dark to a part of the shore where the water was very shallow and full of rocks, upon which some of them ran aground. Before they were got afloat the booming of cannon and rattle of musketry on the other side of the river announced that General Riall had begun the attack. Day was then breaking, and the noise and confusion of the men struggling in the icy water immediately attracted the enemy's attention, and in a few minutes every gun in the batteries that could be brought to bear opened fire upon them, before they had fairly got under way. Five field guns that had been hastily mounted on the dismantled earthworks on the Canadian shore replied at once, but in most cases their shot fell short and failed not only to silence the American guns but even to disperse the crowds of infantry that lined the bank. Exposed to a musketry fire from 600 men for fully fifteen minutes, the Scots lost fifty men killed or wounded before they set foot on shore. None of the boats, however, were either destroyed or disabled and the landing was finally effected in admirable order. The banks were climbed and the batteries taken almost without a struggle. At the same time General Riall was steadily advancing from below, brushing the militia before him with ease, although the broken nature of the ground and innumerable thickets necessarily rendered his progress slow. ²

On the first alarm some hundreds of Hall's men had deserted, many of them actually leaving their arms in the houses where they had been quartered. The commands of Warren and Churchill were dispersed at the first attack. Adams and Chapin came to their support and were routed with equal facility. These were succeeded by Granger's Indians, and Mallory's corps, who for some time kept up a brisk though ill-directed fire from the shelter of woods and fences, while Hall collected the remainder of his troops in and about an earthwork and log blockhouse, known as Fort Tompkins. Here they had two 12-pounders and a 24-pounder worked by regulars and seamen under Lieut. Farmer of the 21st Infantry, and a 6-pounder field-piece served by the volunteer artillery company. The strength of this position should have enabled them at least to make a creditable resistance, but they were scattered at the first charge and all their guns taken. At the junction of the Black Rock road with Main street in Buffalo, Chapin made a final stand with another field gun, but finding that there was no prospect of success, came forward with a white flag and surrendered the place. It

1. Drummond; Hall; James; Lossing. 2. Drummond; Hall; James; Ketchum; Lossing; Dorsheimer; in Buffalo Hist. Coll.

was found impossible to rally the fugitives, and Hall retired at once to the Eleven Mile Creek, where he was unable to collect more than two or three hundred men. The remainder had disbanded and returned to their homes in small parties, spreading panic wherever they passed. Their loss in killed and wounded was never accurately ascertained, in consequence. One writer indeed gives the names of eighty-seven of the former, and another states that eighty-nine bodies were buried in a single grave. A historian of Chautauqua County relates that only six men out of a company of twenty-one returned to their homes, and an officer marching through Cattaraugus County the following summer comments on the "great scarcity of men, which he attributes to the heavy losses sustained by the militia at Buffalo. General Riall was therefore probably not very far astray when he estimated their killed and wounded at between 300 and 400. Lt.-Col. Boughton, of the cavalry. Major Dudley, and Adjutant Totman of the Canadian volunteers, were the only officers of rank killed. The prisoners, according to the official return, numbered one hundred and thirty, among whom were Lieut.-Colonels Chapin and Gardner. The victors lost 102 in killed, wounded and missing.* 1

The dispersion of General Hall's force was complete. On the 6th of January General Wadsworth reported that only 200 men out of as many thousands had assembled at Eleven Mile Creek. "The consternation of the militia is so great," he added, "that they cannot be reduced to tolerable order for some time. One hundred regulars and fifty Indians would now march to Batavia without serious opposition. The frontier is now dependent for its safety on the clemency of the English, Butler's Rangers, and the Indians." General Hall corroborated this view of the situation, and admitted that his loss in killed and wounded was much more serious than he had at first believed. Fifty of the dead had been buried and others were lying scattered in the woods where they fell.

During the three days following the action the villages of Black Rock and Buffalo were almost entirely destroyed. Most of the inhabitants had abandoned their dwellings and removed their most valuable household effects in anticipation of the attack. One woman is said, however, to have been killed in resisting the Indians. The wooden buildings were burnt and a few of the more substantial houses blown up. The navy yard at Black Rock and four vessels of the Lake Erie squadron, the *Ariel*, *Chippawa*, *Trippe* and *Little Belt*, were likewise destroyed. The Seneca village in the vicinity shared the same fate, and Colonel Gordon with the Royal Scots, and a squadron of the 19th Dragoons under Major Lisle, marched down to Lewiston,

*1st Royal Scots—Two corporals and 13 privates killed, 3 sergeants and 27 privates wounded, 6 privates missing. 8th Kings—7 privates killed, Lt.-Col. Ogilvie, Lieut. Young and 14 privates wounded. 89th—3 privates killed, 5 wounded. 100th—Capt. Fawcett and 4 privates wounded. Militia—3 privates killed, Capt. Servos and 5 privates wounded. Indians—3 killed, 3 wounded.

1. Ketchum; Warren; Hist. Chautauqua Co.; Johnson, History Erie Co.; White, Hist. Fenton, etc.

laying waste the country as they passed.* These events spread terror throughout western New York. A traveller met on the road between Cayuga and Le Roy more than one hundred families in waggons, sleighs and sleds, and found the Tuscarora Indians encamped in the woods without shelter, near the latter village. The Governor of the State said, "The panic which these transactions have spread among the inhabitants is inconceivable. They are abandoning their possessions and flocking into the interior." The relieving committee report that the "whole of Niagara County and all that part of Genesee County west of the Genesee river" were quite depopulated, and that all the settlements in a tract of country forty miles square were "entirely broken up." Many persons living east of the Genesee deserted their homes in the first shock of panic, and the roads for many miles were covered with fugitives.¹

The destruction of Niagara had been avenged ten-fold, and the wretched inhabitants on both sides of the river had suffered in turn all the miseries that war could inflict.

* The number of buildings destroyed was stated as follows by the committee on losses: At Buffalo—66 wooden houses, 2 brick, 1 stone, 16 stores, 25 barns, 15 shops, valued at \$190,000. At Black Rock—16 frame houses, 11 log houses, 8 barns, \$19,000. Elsewhere—10 frame houses, 67 log houses, 5 stores, 29 barns, 20 shops, valued at \$141,000.

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1. Buffalo Gazette; Albany Argus.

d

b

Niagara River

Chippawa River

CHIPPAWA

Scale of Feet
0 100 200 300 400 500 600

References

- a. a. a. Intrenchments
b Site of the proposed Redoubt
c Battery
d Battery of one 12 P. on traversing platform
N^o 1 Site of Log Barracks with loop holes for 160 men
2 Barracks for 45 Men hired
3 do do 120 " "
4 do do 60 " "
5 do do 2 " "
6 Stable for Artillery Horses

Canadian Archives
No 128-1 p 39 a.
1814.

